FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Plains and Brookings School District Launch Same Page

Brookings, S.D. — November 5, 2026 — Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Plains and Brookings School District are partnering to launch Same Page, a new dyslexia and literacy support initiative designed to help adults better recognize literacy challenges in youth and respond appropriately within their roles.

Funded through an anonymous donor grant and additional Boys & Girls Clubs resources, the initiative represents a combined $50,000 investment in staff development and youth support. Same Page will launch in Brookings in January 2027, with Brookings serving as the pilot community. The work will be refined locally with the intent of expanding the model to the other communities served by Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Plains.

“Many literacy challenges can show up as behaviors that are often misunderstood,” said Jody Hernandez, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Plains. “By helping adults recognize the signs of dyslexia and other literacy barriers, we can better support young people, build their confidence and create more positive learning experiences.”

At the center of Same Page is a shared training library that can be adapted to different audiences' needs. The work is connected to the Unkenholz Family Dyslexia Preparedness Program CARE framework: Comprehend, Assess, Respond and Empower. South Dakota State University has already begun using several CARE-based modules, while the Same Page partnership will develop additional training and resources designed specifically for District, Club and community audiences.

The partnership will also create a Literacy Library of practical resources for caregivers, paraprofessionals, substitutes, Club staff, transportation staff, coaches, volunteers and other adults who support children but are not certified teachers. As new modules and resources are created, Brookings School District, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Plains and South Dakota State University will all have access to the shared body of work.

The training structure will range from introductory awareness for families and volunteers to more advanced learning and leadership development for educators and District and Club leaders. The goal is not to make every adult a literacy specialist. Instead, Same Page helps each person understand what to notice, how to respond and when to connect a child with additional support.

This approach will allow classroom teachers to engage in deeper instructional learning while paraprofessionals, substitutes, content area teachers, transportation staff, coaches, Club professionals and families access resources relevant to how they interact with children.

“Literacy doesn't begin and end during a reading lesson or even during the school day,” said Dr. Summer Schultz, Superintendent of Brookings School District. “Our teachers bring tremendous expertise to this work, but students are also surrounded by paraprofessionals, substitutes, staff members, families and community partners who can reinforce their confidence and learning. Same Page gives us an opportunity

to build common understanding while recognizing that what each adult needs to know and how they support a child, will look different depending upon their role."

"From the classroom to the school bus to the Club, children benefit when the adults around them have a shared understanding of literacy challenges and know how to respond appropriately," said Hernandez. "The goal is not to turn every adult into a reading teacher. It is to help each person understand what they can do, within their role, to help a child feel supported and successful."

By creating a common foundation, this initiative aims to strengthen the network of adults who support children from early childhood through high school. The Brookings pilot will serve as the starting point for a model that can expand to the other communities served by Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Plains including Elkton, Milbank, Moody County, Vermillion and Yankton.

Questions about Same Page may be directed to Jody Hernandez, Chief Executive Officer of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Plains, at jhernandez@greatfuturessd.org or Dr. Summer Schultz, Superintendent of Brookings School District, at summer.schultz@k12.sd.us.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Plains
For more than 22 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Plains (BGCNP) has been building safe, welcoming spaces where youth can learn, grow and thrive. Founded in Brookings, South Dakota, BGCNP has grown to serve more than 4,500 youth and families annually across six communities – Brookings, Elkton, Milbank, Moody County, Vermillion and Yankton – making BGCNP the largest Boys & Girls Clubs organization in the state of South Dakota. BGCNP also includes three Early Childhood Enrichment Clubhouses in Brookings, Flandreau, and Vermillion, as well as Flandreau Indian School, a Bureau of Indian Affairs Education site serving students in grades 9–12.

BGCNP's evidence-based programming is built around four priority outcome areas: Academic Success, Health & Wellbeing, Character & Leadership and Life & Workforce Readiness. All programs are delivered through a trauma-informed lens, recognizing that every young person deserves an environment built on consistency, care and high expectations.

BGCNP is a proud member of Boys & Girls Clubs of America and works alongside Clubs across the nation to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens. Learn more at www.greatfuturessd.org.